

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAN JO 02214 182204Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 2214

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, CS
SUBJECT: VESCO CASE: EXPULSION

REF: STATE 107035

1. SUMMARY. EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS AGAINST USG EXPULSION REQUEST AT THIS TIME. GOCR IS UNDER GROWING PRESSURE TO EXPEL VESCO BUT US EXPULSION REQUEST COULD BE USED AS OSTENSIBLE REASON NOT TO DO SO. IN MEANTIME. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS USG PREPARE EXTRADITION REQUEST FOR PRESENTATION IN NEAR FUTURE. ATMOSPHERE FOR SUCCESSFUL EXTRADITION MOST PROPITIOUS WE HAVE EVER HAD. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY HAS CAREFULLY CONSIDERED EXPULSION REQUEST POSSIBILITY MENTIONED IN REFTEL. BECAUSE OF SCANDAL IN WHICH VESCO ROLE IN '74 CAMPAIGN IS BEING SO HOTLEY DISCUSSED AT PRESENT (AND IN WHICH CORRUPTION IN ODUBER GOVERNMENT, VESCO-RELATED AND OTHERWISE, IS FAST BECOMING A MAJOR DOMESTIC ISSUE), WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT A USG EXPULSION REQUEST AT THIS TIME WOULD BE MOST INADVISABLE. AS SITUATION NOW STANDS, PRESIDENT ODUBER IS UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM MEDIA, THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION, AND VARIOUS ELEMENTS WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT VESCO, PREFERABLY TO EXPEL HIM FROM COUNTRY. ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT PRESSURE WILL CONTINUE TO MOUNT OVER NEXT SEVERAL

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WEEKS AT LEAST, AND ODUBER HAS TO BE LOOKING DESPERATELY FOR A WAY OUT FROM UNDER. USG COULD PROVIDE THAT WAY OUT BY REQUESTING VESCO'S EXPULSION, THEREBY ALLOWING ODUBER TO WRAP HIMSELF IN FLAG AND REFUSE TO MOVE AGAINST VESCO AS ACT OF REJECTION OF "USG PRESSURE AND INTERFERENCE IN COSTA RPYD'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS."

3. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT IN DECEMBER, 1974 WHEN ANTI-

VESCO SENTIMENT LAST PEAKED, ODUBER DISSOLVED PRESSURE TO EXPEL VESCO BY IMPLYING DESTABILIZATION PLOTS INVOLVING MULTINATIONALS, SEC, AND OTHER NEFARIOUS FORCES. THE IMPLIED BOTTOM LINE OF HIS STATEMENT AT THAT TIME WAS THAT EXTERNALLY DIRECTED FORCES WERE STIRRING UP VESCO POT TO FORCE DOWN-FALL HIS GOVERNMENT, THAT HE WOULD EXPEL VESCO IF LATTER VIOLATED COSTA RICAN LAW BUT WOULD NOT DO SO IN RESPONSE TO FOREIGN PRESSURES, ETC. DEPARTMENT WILL ALSO RECALL THE 1974 EXTRADITION LAW DEBATE, DURING WHICH TIME THE EMBASSY WAS ACCUSED OF ATTEMPTING TO BRING PRESSURE TO BEAR ON ASSEMBLY MEMBERS TO REJECT THE LAW. LAST YEAR, ODUBER STATED PUBLICLY THAT IT WAS IN DIRECT RESPONSE TO UNWARRANTED PRESSURE FROM A FOREIGN EMBASSY THAT HE INSTRUCTED HIS PARTY TO SUPPORT THE VESCO EXTRADITION LAW IN 1974. FINALLY, AS REPORTED SAN JOSE 1818, ODUBER VERY RECENTLY HAS ALLUDED TO DESTABILIZATION EFFORTS BY MULTINATIONALS TOGETHER WITH UNPATRIOTIC LOCALS AS BASIC CAUSE OF CURRENT POLITICAL CONTROVERSY HERE. THUS, IF ODUBER DECIDES THAT HE HAS TO PROTECT VESCO WHILE STILL CALMING THE POLITICAL STORM THAT IS RAGING ABOUT HIM AND HIS ALLEGED RECEIPT OF CAMPAIGN FINANCING FROM VESCO, WE CAN EXPECT TO SEE DESTABILIZING THEME PLAYED AGAIN, THIS NEXT TIME PERHAPS MORE LOUDLY AND CLEARLY. THIS IS NOT A CREDIBLE THEME HERE AND WE SHOULD NOT HELP IT TO BECOME ONE BY REQUESTING EXPULSION.

4. EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT USG MAINTAIN VERY LOW PROFILE ON VESCO FOR TIME BEING, ALLOWING PRESSURES IN COSTA RICA TO DEVELOP NATURALLY AND WAITING TO SEE WHETHER ODUBER WILL YIELD TO PRESSURES BY EXPELLING VESCO. THERE IS A CONSIDERABLE BODY OF LOCAL OPINION THAT BELIEVES THAT ODUBER WILL HAVE TO TAKE THAT STEP IN ORDER TO EASE THE CURRENT POLITICAL CONTROVERSY. CONFIDENTIAL

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THERE IS ALSO SOME THOUGHT THAT ODUBER WILL SIMPLY RIDE OUT THIS CONTROVERSY FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AND THEN LEAVE ON JUNE 12 ON HIS TRIP TO RUMANIA AND FRANCE, HOPING THE PROBLEM WILL HAVE DISAPPEARED BY THE TIME OF HIS RETURN. ALTERNATIVELY, HE COULD DEPART FOR EUROPE ON JUNE 12 WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OR EXPECTATION THAT ACTING PRESIDENT GUZMAN MATA -- AN OUTSPOKEN CRITIC OF VESCO'S PRESENCE IN COSTA RICA -- WOULD EXPEL VESCO IN HIS ABSENCE. FINALLY, ODUBER COULD DECIDE TO TIGHTEN IT UP, POSSIBLY CANCELLING HIS TRIP TO EUROPE, AND MOUNTING WHATEVER KIND OF DEFENSE COUNTER-ATTACK APPEARED TO HIM TO BE MOST CREDIBLE AND EFFECTIVE.

5. SINCE WE CANNOT PREDICT WHAT ODUBER MAY FINALLY DECIDE TO DO ABOUT VESCO, WE SHOULD BE MOVING NOW ON PREPARATION OF AN EXTRADITION REQUEST. THEN, IF WE CONCLUDE THAT VESCO IS NOT GOING TO BE EXPELLED, WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO FILE THE REQUEST QUICKLY IN ORDER TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE MOST FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE FOR A SUCCESSFUL EXTRADITION THAT WE HAVE EVER HAD. OUR TIMING WILL BE CRITICAL; WE HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO ACT BY

MID-JUNE.

6. IF THE GOCR DOES DECIDE THAT VESCO HAS TO BE EXPELLED,
WE ARE NOT LIKELY TO RECEIVE ADVANCE NOTICE OF TIME AND
DESTINATION. ACCORDINGLY, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT DEPARTMENT
CONSIDER ADVISING EMBASSIES AND PERHAPS GOVERNMENTS IN LIKELY
FUTURE COUNTRIES OF REFUGE OF USG INTEREST IN HAVING VEYTS
RETURNED TO U.S. FOR PROSECUTION. KILDAY

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